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AUTHOR Piccininni, James
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ABSTRACT

This brief 3-page paper gives a broad outline of the type of qualifications needed for a librarian to become a library director. Four requirements that candidates should meet are suggested: (1) a work record involving both public and technical library services; (2) a second Master's degree or doctoral degree; (3) evidence of initiative as revealed through committee membership in professional associations, publication of scholarly articles, presentations at conferences, creation or significant expansion of library services, receipt of grant awards, and other similar achievements; and (4) a stable, well-grounded work ethic. In addition, it is recommended that candidates be geographically mobile. (MAS)

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Qualifications Necessary to Become a Library Director

Submitted by: James Piccininni

1404 Richmond Avenue, Houston, Texas 77006

(713) 522-4695

R055509

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If you are beginning a career as a librarian, you eventually will be faced with considering the option of becoming a library director and deciding whether or not that path is right for you. This article is intended to give you a broad outline of the type of qualifications you will most likely need in order to be considered for a library directorship. Scanning the classified advertisements of several professional library publications such as American Libraries and the Chronicle of Higher Education will enable you to develop a sense of the type of jobs available in the profession. In addition, there are several common themes that appear throughout these advertisements. Realizing that there are common requirements will allow you to set a clear path that is focused upon achieving the ultimate goal of finding employment as a library administrator. There were several steps that I had taken in my own path to administration and they can be placed into the following four general categories of suggested requirements:

1. In the area of experience, a work record involving both public and technical services is very helpful. While it is important to be concerned with patron needs, it is also important to have a knowledge of the cataloging issues involved with managing a complex database. As a director you will need to understand, through direct experience, the issues and potential solutions to problems in both technical and public service areas. Lack of experience in either area may create a director whose view of a library is colored by a

too narrow work experience. To best develop your potential to become a director, you must be comfortable in dealing with all aspects of library service and the various concerns facing each area of the library. Employers will often look for such a well rounded work experience for administrative positions.

2. In the area of education, a second masters's degree or doctoral degree will be valued. Specialization in a subject area increases your value to the organization that employs you and the additional education places you in a select category that elevates you above the majority of librarians who hold a single master's degree.

3. Evidence of initiative as revealed through committee membership in professional associations, publication of scholarly articles, presentations at conferences, creation or significant expansion of library services, receipt of grant awards, and other similar achievements will certainly support your candidacy. The additional contribution to your resume in one or more of these areas will serve to further justify your candidacy for a directorship.

4. There is no substitute for giving your employee an honest day's work, approaching your job with an attitude of looking for ways to improve yourself and the organization that you are employed with. A stable, well-grounded work ethic will be recognized by enough of

your colleagues to insure a steady supply of positive references when the time comes for your career advancement.

In addition to the items listed above, you may be faced with a future decision that will require you to relocate. There are many librarians capable of becoming successful directors who are not willing to make the geographic relocation that is often necessary. Geographic restrictions obviously can severely restrict your career possibilities. You must come to terms with this fact.

It is hoped that this article assists you with your intent to eventually move into library administration. The beginning of your library career is the time to establish a solid foundation upon which to build your future career. While the time required to acquire the education and experience necessary to achieve your goal may extend a number of years, the fulfillment of your career goals should make the effort a worthwhile one.